

Sermon: The Wedding feast. John 2:1-11 The unexpected happened.

Prayer: Gracious God of abundance, when times are challenging, help us not to focus on scarcity and only our needs. Help us to include our neighbours and seek ways to take care of other needs.

Amen

**Introduction:** (Photos of the Wedding at Cana painting at the Louvre Museum, Paris., France. The summer of 2023, Ken and I took a trip on Church History & Religious sites Rome to Paris). The painting was done by Paolo Veronese. It is the largest painting in the Museum and considered an important work. It is an elaborate banquet, revealing the identity of Jesus and the joy of communion with God.

Today's reading from John 2:1-11 is the miracle of celebration and rejoicing. It marks the beginning of Jesus first public act of ministry after his baptism at the Jordan River by John the Baptist. The wedding at Cana seems like the perfect setting to begin the work of God. It is at a social gathering where the mystery of God's love and abundant life are given to the community.

Do you love wedding? Whether it is our own wedding, a son or daughter, relative, friend, or co-worker, it is a celebration. We look forward to the ceremony, rituals, food, drinks, friends, location, music, wedding party and flowers,. The big question for women is; what will I wear? You want to know about the colours, decorations, invitees and the list goes on. We build up a momentum of excitement.

Jesus belonged to a community that placed great emphasis on cultural traditions. The community placed a great emphasis on social gatherings. Everyone was there. It was a feast, the perfect time of celebrating, a social banquet, and Jesus was not on duty.

I believe Jesus loves a good party. The metaphor paints a picture of a fun time in the community with people, listening and celebrating life. It was where then the unexpected happened; the miracle of changing water to wine. The event changed the lives of people. This is a metaphor of change, transforming and saving people and it is still happening today around the world.

Do you recalled being at a wedding celebration and something went wrong, an awkward moment? It was not the priest that messed up nor the bride or groom speaking out of turn.

Usually the minister mispronounces names or confuses the pronouns of the couple when taking

their vows. I recalled a minister shared the ring fell and rolled down the aisle. We are usually prepared but the unexpected happens and we never forget the awkward moment.

I officiated at both my son and daughter's wedding. My son was the first wedding. I kept my emotions in balance and I seemed at ease until at the end when presenting the couple to the congregation. Instead of saying to the congregation, please welcome Mr. & Mrs. Orin Roberts, I said please welcome Orin Ramsammy. I gave him her name. You know the feeling of excitement and letting go! The people laughed and I have not forgotten that awkward moment.

At Cana everyone was having a great party until the wine ran out. After all, it's the third day of the wedding banquet. Three days means a lot of wine, and celebrating. It seems like a thirsty bunch and we can very well imagine that they ran dry. Marriage feasts were all about rejoicing in the love and commitment of the new couple. It is the sign of the potential new life they will bring to the community. The water pots filled with water for baptism meant new life and rejoicing! "As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you" (Isaiah 62:5). We then rejoice because God rejoices. The celebration with wine was a sign of the presence of God in the harvest of abundance in the community. Not scarcity.

The host ran out of wine was a disastrous sign to the community. The awkward moment, the talk, gossip and murmuring all happened. How embarrassed it was for the community? But God's story does not end with scarcity, the mystery of God's abundance unfold in the gathering. They saw and were in awe as God's light was revealed.

Lives were saved and God's grace continues to spread over centuries and generations across cultures. Jesus began his ministry with the miracle of abundance in the social gathering of the community life. Everyone was invited, everyone had a place at the table, everyone participated and there was enough for all.

God is the provider taking care of both physical and spiritual needs. This metaphor continues with each one of us today. We are at the party. God is transforming our lives each day so that we can go into the community and share the love of Jesus Christ. At this wedding that seemed to have gone sour the unexpected timing of God's manifestation in Jesus brings hope, light and life to the community. This is the meaning of Epiphany. It is all about the perfect timing for God's intervention or God made manifest.

There are two kinds of timing in this story. One is the kind of time with which we count and track the everyday events of our lives. It is the time that is measured in minutes and seconds, hours and days. It is the time we spend standing in lines, or clocking in at work, or waiting at the stoplight. It is mundane, ordinary time and it beats on relentlessly until that time when we close our eyes and escape the dull, predictable cadence. But there is another kind of time, as well, a royal kind of time, where all that is predictable fades and what emerges in its place is possibility.

Have you ever been in such a space and time? This is God's time. It punctures through the ordinary canvas and clock of our lives at unexpected intervals and surprisingly reveals a glimpse of the divine. So when Jesus speaks of his "hour" it does not mean time and date on a calendar. It is the time when God will be accessible to all, once and for all. Jesus is at the party, social gatherings, community meetings, worship and wherever there are needs; **resurrection and abundance** are right here in our midst.

Worship makes all the difference. Each moment that we live in Jesus, has the capacity to mediate the divine. An ordinary hug can convey unbounded love and blessing. The smallest donation of food or money can tip the balance between scarcity and abundance. Our monetary offering allows us to celebrate the abundance of life. A simple act of kindness can make all the difference in the world. And a smile, shared at just the right time, can shed light into the darkest of places of someone's heart.

Remember to take a look at all the ordinary, mundane elements of your life because whatever time we think it may be, it is also God's time, and when God is in our midst **all things are possible. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philipians 4:13.**

Jesus turns water into wine to make sure the marriage feast he is attending can be as joyous as it should be. And this marriage feast foretells to his disciples what it means to be with "the bridegroom" now and in the age to come. **Amen!**

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